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## Tribe says it has big plans for Airway Heights

**Speculation has swirled for months that Spokane Tribe may build large casino**

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The Spokane Tribe of Indians said it will unveil next week big plans for a 145-acre parcel on the western outskirts of Airway Heights.

Speculation has swirled for many months that the tribe is preparing to build a big casino in the area.

The first part of the three-phase development will be the construction of a **SPOKO Fuel station**, the tribe announced in a press release. The tribe owns the trust land along Highway 2 near Craig Road.

Further plans are being withheld until a groundbreaking on Jan. 27. Tribal spokespeople couldn't be reached for comment.

The Spokane Tribe had been in negotiations with the state gambling commission on a new gaming compact. The proposed compact was withdrawn last fall, however, after Gov. Christine Gregoire expressed concerns over its provisions.

One proposal discussed last fall would permit the Tribe to have up to 4,000 gambling machines in a casino just outside Airway Heights.

The Tribe already operates the Two Rivers Casino north of Davenport.

The Kalispel Tribe's Northern Quest Casino on the West Plains operates 1,200 gambling machines.

Airway Heights City Manager Chuck Freeman said he hasn't seen the tribe's plans for the area and declined to speculate on them.

Tribal casinos do not pay property taxes because they are built on Indian trust lands. Casinos do, however, often pay impact fees to local governments to offset costs for such services as police.

In a press release, the tribe said that when completed, the entire not-yet-disclosed development would create 2,100 jobs on the West Plains.